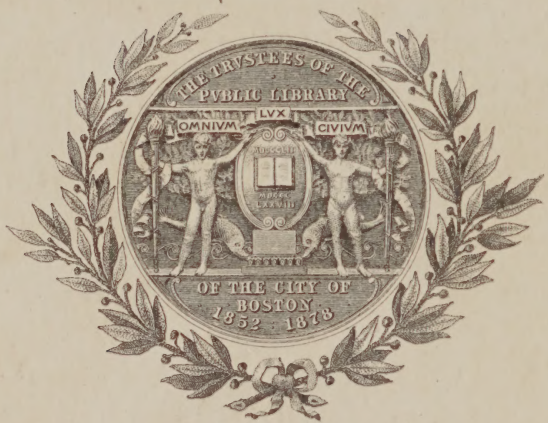
BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 9999 08632 551 9

№ 7551.240



GIVEN BY

Rev. Nathaniel Sears, Jr.

SERVICES

AT THE

ORDINATION

OF

REV. W. H. CUDWORTH,

AT

7551.240

East Boston, March 17, 1852.

EAST BOSTON:
TYLER AND BLANCHARD, PRINTERS.
1852.

SERVICES

AT THE

ORDINATION

OF

REV. W. H. CUDWORTH,

AT

7551.240

East Boston, March 17, 1852.

EAST BOSTON:
TYLER AND BLANCHARD, PRINTERS.
1852.

Dep. of Do. 18 in * 7450.56

Rev. Nathaniel Seaver, Jr.
April 20, 1904.

PUBLIC LIBRARY
OF THE
CITY OF BOSTON

SERMON.

BY REV. HENRY A. MILES, D. D.

Romans 7:22, 23.

"FOR I DELIGHT IN THE LAW OF GOD AFTER THE INWARD MAN; BUT I SEE ANOTHER LAW IN MY MEMBERS, WARRING AGAINST THE LAW OF MY MIND, AND BRINGING ME INTO CAPTIVITY TO THE LAW OF SIN WHICH IS IN MY MEMBERS."

EVERY few years it seems to be necessary to take a new "observation" of certain old theological doctrines which have filled a large place in the teachings of the church. Perhaps we think differently about them now from what we did some time ago, and by the new survey a progress of opinion may be proved, just as the mariner may see how far he has floated on the bosom of the ocean, by looking again at the buoy that has been erected amid its surging currents. And as in the case of the mariner, *all* well-meant "observations" are considered worth reporting, to be corrected by those who stand in higher places of influence, so I may venture to describe some of the bearings of the doctrine of human nature, as they appear at the present time amid the changes of views through which we have all been passing.

Doubts have sometimes been expressed as to the *sense* in which Paul used the words which I have chosen for my text. On this point three views have been enter-

tained. 1st. That he intended to describe a conflict with sin which he had to maintain *after* his conversion to the gospel; 2d. That he gives an account of his personal consciousness and experience while in his former unrenewed state; 3d. That he spoke only in the name of the Jewish nation, or of a struggle of which every Jew must have been conscious under the bondage of the Mosaic law.

The question of the true interpretation of the passage is not altogether free from difficulties, it must be confessed; but when the Apostle in this chapter describes himself as "in the flesh," "carnal, sold under sin," "in captivity to it," and as at length delivered only "through Jesus Christ," it seems most obvious and natural, as it is most consistent with the argument of the epistle, to regard this language as descriptive of the internal conflict he felt *prior* to his conversion,—a conflict not peculiar to Paul, nor peculiar to the Jewish race, but which belongs to man *as* man, of every nation and age.

In this broad sense two things are here affirmed, two things as facts of human nature; one is, that man possesses a capacity of seeing what is right, and that he naturally loves the right, and finds a witness in his own soul that God's law is holy, just and good; the other is, that there are bound up within him certain antagonist principles, appetites, passions, desires and antipathies craving action, and almost sure to run into sin, and all constituting a force so hostile to what his soul really loves, that there is a warfare between them. And the method of my discourse will be to speak in turn of both of these constituent parts of human nature; to point out how much we may properly consider them as embracing and implying; to mark some of the extremes into which good men, on both sides, have been pushed in the heats of con-

troversy; to consider the mutual action upon one another of "the law of the members," and the "law of the mind," so that we may see what sin is, and how men become sinners; and, finally, to set forth, if possible, some views of human nature, considered as a whole, which shall be scriptural and reasonable, in harmony with our consciousness and experience, and with the facts of history, and which may constitute the basis of earnest and solemn views of life and duty.

On topics so vast as these, which have exercised the profoundest thoughts of man, and on which libraries have been written, I am fully aware how presumptuous it may seem to attempt to comprehend any thing useful within the limits of a sermon,—a presumption, perhaps, exceeded only by one other, that after all that has been published upon this subject, it is possible to present it in any new light. While I trust that no folly like this will be imputed to me, I am yet encouraged to enter upon the path I have indicated, by remembering that my purpose is to fix your attention upon the words of my text, *as the true and sufficient statement of the doctrine of man's nature*, a statement intelligible, free from contradictory extremes, running into no subtleties beyond the reach of our faculties, stopping where we may stop, and eminently fruitful of practical and solemn lessons. In this respect it is not unworthy to take a place among a few plain and comprehensive passages of scripture which render an immensely important service to the peace of our minds. They may be compared to what we have sometimes seen in the top of a long railway tunnel,—the apertures through which daylight is let in from above; and if walking along one of these cavernous tracks, for the purpose of learning how it was constructed, how surely should we select as the point of our observation, not the

dark place, but the spot where this light was streaming down upon us. So sounding our dim and perilous way through the dark passage of life, let us bless God for the open apertures of these plain texts, and let us come around them with grateful and trusting hearts, that we may enjoy their light.

1. I approach, then, the first proposition of my text, which is, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." Commentators tell us that the phrase, *the inward man*, was a common expression with the ancient Greek ethic writers, who denote by it, what we see it obviously means, the interior, rational and immortal part of man's nature ; and this part, the Apostle tells us, naturally delights in the law of God, that is, comprehends it, accepts it, approves it, loves it, as the law of its being.

And what a great fact this simple statement sets forth. Think of it for one moment. Is it not the greatest fact in the development of our race, and that for which we should be most profoundly thankful ? The child born into the world to-day has an approbation of God's law in its heart. Other things, passion and appetite, may be more active and may override it and suppress it, as I shall by and by show ; still we know that as soon as reason and conscience dawn in the child's soul, that approbation of God's law is *there*,—that primeval sense of what is right, and love for what is good and true, to which all early instruction appeals, without which all exhortation, warning, entreaty and moral discipline would be as ineffectual as if they had been bestowed upon a brute, and which every code of civil law recognizes in fixing the age when men usually attain to a knowledge of right and wrong. This inborn approbation of God's law, through what generations of transgressors, through what ages of iniquity has it been preserved ! Sin introduced into the world by

Adam, and from his day to ours maintaining a rebellious empire in human affairs, has yet found one spot it cannot corrupt,—the native heart of a little child. What other merely human thing has it not brought under its sway! What rank, what office, what learning, what genius has it not sometime infected; what position of wealth or poverty, of fame or obscurity, of care and suffering, or of freedom and ease, has it not sometime invaded! But one thing it has never yet defiled,—that inner man of the reason and the conscience, which from generation to generation has been reproduced pure as it came from the hands of God, and which in days of awful profligacy and wickedness, like those before the flood or like those which brought on the doom of Sodom, were almost the only things which had not become polluted in God's sight. Lodgements in other parts of our nature the taint of evil may have found, but not here; over other gifts and faculties of man the leprosy of sin may have spread, but not here in the native conscience of the child. And for this reason was it that Jesus said of those in whom sinful appetites and passions had not had time to develope themselves, "Suffer them to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven;" implying, not that they had matured virtues and tried holiness, but that they *did* possess a native innocence and purity, a discernment and approbation of what is right and good, to which he elsewhere adds, all men must be converted. And it is for this same reason,—the possession of such an "inward man" as this,—that we can look only with profound astonishment on the assertion that man is "*totally*" depraved.

On this subject of total depravity it is not necessary to enter into any argument. Sincere religious convictions should always be treated with respect, a respect which I

do not feel that I violate in expressing the belief that nothing but the necessities of a system, aided by the subtleties of the old scholastic metaphysics, could have at first pushed reasonable men into such an extreme. No one doubts that the facts of consciousness and experience, observations of childhood, the government of the young, the aspects of society, the history of the world, all unite with the voice of scripture to prove that there is depravity in human character, a dark stream running through all human history, and more or less through all individual experience, over which good men have wept, and on account of which God's pity was moved to send one to seek and to save the lost; but when I am told that this depravity is "*total*," in any proper or reasonable sense of that word, I can look upon the proposition with no more favor than I would upon another which should affirm that *all* men are born into the world with a black skin, the outer coat of which has become white by incessant washing, while the inner one is black still. This last assertion could do no more violence, than the other, to the common sense of the world. And born in an age of great darkness and superstition, and fastened into the arch of a system where it has maintained its place, less by any support it has had in itself, than by sheer lateral pressure, what a long, benumbing and darkening power has this dogma swayed! I look upon it as one of the most melancholy proofs of the weakness of the human mind. I class it with a belief in transubstantiation or witchcraft, doctrines upon which future ages will look back with amazement, and wonder how reasonable beings could be so deluded. I deeply commiserate those who have felt obliged to accept this tenet. How often must it have awakened fearful thoughts in a mother's mind if she could feel, as she looked upon the sleeping babe in

her arms, that there slumbers an enemy of God! How often must it have led men to interpret actions and motives, innocent in themselves, by the horrible views which their creeds suggested to their minds; and, worse than this, how often must it have encouraged men in a course of indulgence and crime, by the thought that this is what they are fitted for, and are driven to by the very necessities of their nature. Who can doubt, also, that in thus stupefying the conscience, it has paralyzed the power of truth on other points, and blunted the edge of preaching, and tended to lower the standard of Christian morals. And then the present condition of mankind, the prospects of the world, the disclosures of eternity, who can tell in what awful gloom all these have been shrouded, by this dark dogma of man's total depravity. The only good thing about it is, that in thousands of cases where it has been professed it could not have been believed, because the mind instinctively throws it off, just as the stomach does certain concentrated poisons, which through the very intensity of their malignity are made innocuous.

And who does not rejoice that in this age of the world, the tenet we are now considering is retiring from the open field of theological opinion and religious belief, to those obscure dens and caves to which other spectres have been driven? We are sometimes distrustful of the effects of controversy; but if they produce no changes of opinion while the excitement of the discussion lasts, in the calm moments of reflection which succeed, attention will be fixed on the weak points which have been sorely pressed, and these will be modified and strengthened. It is instructive to look back and see how stern creeds have been mitigated and mellowed during the last thirty years. The doctrine of the damnation of infants, for-

merly held and preached, has been, within the time named, publicly renounced, and is now by its former advocates regarded with the same horror with which we look upon it ourselves. Man's absolute incapacity to do any works good in the sight of God, previous to his regeneration, was a doctrine unquestioned by a certain class of divines a generation ago ; but is now by them repudiated as both false and pernicious. Our guilt for Adam's sin, formerly affirmed in the strongest manner, is now very generally denied by those who used to maintain it, and the whole doctrine of original sin, in the sense of its being any "sin" at all transmitted to us and for which we must answer, is set aside, and the word sin is limited to our *personal* acts, by the known and voluntary transgression of law.

These changes of opinion are honorable to the inquiry and candor of those who have made them, and are both the proofs and the prophecies of a progressive theology. Even the doctrine of hereditary depravity is professed, I say not by all, but by some of the leading divines in New England, only in the following softened form. They do not deny that man is born into the world with a reason and conscience that sees the right and approves the good, so that his depravity is not total in the sense of its extending over the *whole* of his nature, and accordingly that word "*total*" they do not love to use, and it is now very frequently withdrawn. But, at the same time, it is contended, that by Adam's sin such a *strength* was given to tendencies in our nature which lead to disobedience and transgression, that man, not in all his relations, but as a creature of God, in respect to the divine law, so far as that commandment is concerned which says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and strength," does naturally, and of his own will alone,

always incline to a life of resistance and opposition ; and this wrong inclination in the will, so far as loving God is concerned, and which exists in man prior to any acts, and which he inherits from the fall of Adam, this wrong bias of his will constitutes man's depravity and vitiates every thing in the sphere of a holy life.

These views run at once into some metaphysical and very subtle points. I do not propose to enter into them. That we have strong tendencies in our nature which lead to disobedience and transgression, no one can deny, and on this point I shall by and by speak more fully. That we inherit them from Adam seems to me to be all the more certain because I believe that he had them too, else how could *he* have sinned ? and it was his own imperfect nature which he transmitted to his posterity. That these are stronger in *our* case than they were in *him*, is no doubt true ; for he, unlike us, was born into a sinless world, and we, unlike him, have before us from our first moral consciousness some evil examples. It is easy to confuse one's self with speculations about the freedom of the will. The proneness of some divines to enter into this dark subject, who are yet the loudest to decry all human reasoning, is not the least curious fact in the history of theology. It is, on the whole, a brave and noble inconsistency, but shall not tempt me to go any farther than to say, that for my part I hold it to be enough that of nothing can we be more sure than that the will *is* free. Every other faculty of our nature we readily see can be increased. We can have more memory, more imagination, more judgment ; but we cannot even *conceive* of our having more freedom of will. Or, should it be admitted that there *is* something back of the will, perverting it, and from the very beginning inclining it to the wrong, how sure may we be that this is some-

thing over which we have no control, of which we cannot justly be held guilty, and for the operation of which all due allowance will be made by an infinitely just Judge. And then as to the actual phenomena of childhood, we must remember that the *first* exercises of its conscience and religious affections will be weak, as all its other first exercises will be ; that it appertains to this weakness to have things of *sense* affect it far more than things revealed to no one of its senses, and hence a rattle in its hand will be more a real object than the *only* real object in the world ; that we know not how much of its disinclination to love God may arise from the false lights and infelicities in which we ourselves present the very conception of God to its heart ; that certain appetites and passions are made strong in the young child on purpose to meet the necessities of its mere animal nature, and that it is not until after some development, growth, wise and good training, for all of which the child was as much made as for clothes or food, that the equilibrium of its entire nature is attained ; and that that parent or teacher must have been most unhappy and peculiar in his experience whose children never loved God, never loved goodness, never saw and never felt delight for what was holy and just. Sinless lived Adam for a while in the garden of Eden, and we have the same nature that he had ; sinless during his whole life was Jesus, and we have the same nature as he in his human relation had, for he was tempted in all points as we are ; and sinless in most respects, not in all, have we known many to grow up to be, who have *proved* to us that they had a nature which in the inner man delighted in the law of God, and which would have *perfectly* kept that law, had it not been for the strength of warring forces which were bound up within.

2. Warring forces bound up within.—This brings me

to the second proposition of my text, which is stated in these words. "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." The Apostle here states a fact which is confirmed by the universal experience of mankind,—an antagonism in our nature itself to what we know to be right and approve as the good. From the fact that so many of our sins spring from our connection with a fleshly organization, they receive a name from that circumstance, and are here spoken of as the sin that is in the *members ;* but the Apostle evidently intended to include *every thing* that creates an internal warfare with duty ; not only our bodily appetites, passions and lusts, but the more interior and subtle sins,—the selfishness which looks on its own things alone, the pride which lifts itself above others, the envy that will endure no rival, the hatred that long and unjustly pursues its object, the facile temper that loves to slide along in an easy self-indulgence, the habit of postponing what we know should be done now, the secret pleasure we feel in things forbidden, the contentment with a low and earthly walk when we know our life ought to be up on a higher and holier plane,—these sins, and others which I have not time to name, are all included in the list of foes to the inner man, and they are sins which we find *here* in the heart ; every man has more or less of them, and the deeper he probes his heart the more of these and like sins does he find.

These sins, I say, he finds. But now what by that do we mean ? That in their present strength they were put into our natures by the hand of God ? No. That they were sins at all when we first came into possession of our natures ? No. It has often been said, and I suppose truly, that there is no faculty, instinct or impulse in man,

but what was given him for good. Let me ask you to reflect one moment upon that remarkable fact. Man's nature has had sharp investigators, men of all ages, genius and culture, men who have loved it and men who have hated it, men whose systems and creeds, whose consistency and reputation required them to make it as bad as they could, and who have searched the matter as deeply as they were able, and yet of all these inquirers, I do not understand that there is one who finds a single faculty given to men for evil, so that man cannot make himself a sinner except by the perversion of something that was intended for good. And thus it comes to pass that these sins in man's heart, to which I have just referred, all have their root in some good elements of our nature, and were made sins only when our wills permitted the action of those elements to cross the line which duty and conscience set up. The idea here indicated is stamped into the very structure of human language, which in many tongues, and perhaps in all, makes sin to consist in crossing the line which we see to be right,—as in our language *iniquity* is something unequal, and *transgression* is a going beyond.

How, then, does man become a sinner? We may get an idea of the process by considering the case of Adam, as he stood by the side of the forbidden tree, but before he had touched its fruit. With a nature just like our own, with all the tendencies to action bound up in his heart which we have bound up in our own, and with a will free as our own, he met the temptation which came in his way. It was no sin in him to be pleased with the fruit; he was made to admire it by that eye for beauty which had rested with delight on a thousand other objects around him; it was no sin in him to long to taste the fruit, this was an innocent appetite and had been indulg-

ed and strengthened by partaking of other fruits of the garden. And when he took the forbidden object into his hand, he was as free to lay it down as he was to eat it, and might have laid it down had he so willed. But, there, in the freedom of his will, that he did not pause when he might have paused and ought to have paused, that he did not remember God's commandment when he might have remembered it and ought to have remembered it, that he did not yield obedience when he might have done it and ought to have done it, *there* was his sin,—his own free act, the beginning and illustration of all other sin in the world. Indeed, I know of but one thing that makes our beginning to sin different from his. It is the fact that we are born into a sinful world, while he stood in a sinless one, and that we from the first have examples of evil before us, while he had none. In consequence of this, our liabilities to act in a wrong direction have become increased and strengthened beyond his, and this, too, before we have come in full possession of our moral powers. But what through this cause we cannot help, let us hope a merciful Judge will make allowance for, charging to our account only those sins which we might have avoided and ought to have avoided, and should have avoided had we not turned to evil what was given us for good, through the exercise of our own free will.

And here, as under the former head, I spoke of some extreme positions which the believers in depravity assumed in the heats of controversy, so, on the other hand, I must now speak of *other* extreme positions, on the opposite side of this question, to which I think *we* have been driven by the same cause. It was very natural when we were first coming to see the truth on this subject, and to feel how our understandings and hearts had

been imposed upon by the awful dogma of total depravity, it was very natural for us to go too far the other way, and as some had decried human nature too much, that we should now, in our turn, glorify it too much. It is an instructive fact, in this connection that in one of the earliest controversies on this subject in the defence of the liberal side of the question by a man of rare moderation and prudence, statements were made of the tendencies of human nature to goodness, and of the extent of its fair and holy fruits, which he had the candor soon after to withdraw as altogether too strong, and not borne out by observations of human life and the history of the world.* The current of so much of our preaching and theological literature has been in antagonism to the old error, that who can doubt we have too much looked at one side, and made our statements too strong, so that there are things, which, in imitation of the example I have referred to, it becomes us all to re-state with more care. We have the excuse of our position, perhaps, but who can doubt that the fact is that we have not thought enough of the *evil* of sin ; our great liabilities to it, our fearful perils from it, does it not become us to consider, if on these we have not all too little dwelt ; we have been praising the virtues of human nature, its splendid achievements and triumphs, and not enough probing the weak places and deceitful snares and lurking sins of the human heart ; and such a thing as a morbid anatomy of the *soul*, which shall reveal its diseases and wants and cure, we are too slightly acquainted with ; and, as a consequence, it may be that we do not maintain that tenderness of conscience, that scrupulous watchfulness of the inward eye, that sense of personal sinful-

---

* See Note, p. 21.

ness, that conviction of its utter odiousness in the sight of a pure and holy God, which all true views on this subject should inspire, and which should humble us low in the prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Truth *should* do this,—*the* truth which is the most humbling of all, that all sin is our own free chosen act.

How, also, does the absence of heart-searching and solemn views of sin disqualify us to appreciate the force of the Apostle's language in my text, which represents the attainment of a spiritual life as a "warring" against the law of sin. Critics tell us, that the word here used is that which describes a city besieged, and which, after incessant assaults and attacks, is at length taken by storm; and while such a term does indeed suggest the strength with which the love of what is right and good is entrenched in the human heart, and justifies the proverb that "No man is made a great sinner at once,"—a proverb showing that the common sense of the world has been far more just to our nature than some theological systems, how, on the other hand, does that word bring up before our minds an image of the artifice, ceaseless activity, the undermining and assaulting power of sin, in the presence of which a life of holiness is not that *easy, primrose path* which it is so often described to be, while mere improvement and growth do not at all meet the necessities of the sinner, who so often needs a radical change and conversion instead.

Above all, the want of just views of sin has encouraged a diminished sense of the actual need of Christ's *coming* into the world, of the moral helplessness and hopelessness of man without that divine interposition, and, if so, has so far weakened not only our gratitude for that manifestation of God's divine pity, but also our readiness to appropriate to ourselves the benefit of the

new spiritual forces which constitute the redemption that is in Christ. From hearts so blinded and defrauded, how can there spring forth,—in the warm, gushing tones with which the Apostle answered the question, Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?—I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

At the same time that I say this, I must add that I feel no distrust of the *essential* correctness of the doctrine of human nature which we preach. We may stand before it in unfortunate attitudes, but the more it is examined, the more I believe it will be found to rest on the word of the Son of God and on the rock of his truth. All his instructions, exhortations, precepts, were addressed to reasonable, free-choosing men, in whom he recognized an ability to see and approve of the right. Hence there is an air of cheerfulness and hope in the pages of the gospel in harmony with the spirit of our own representations, and in strong contrast with the dread gloom with which other teachings shroud the world. I look abroad upon mankind, and I see them as I should expect to find them with the natures which I think they possess, ignorant, deceived, misled, guilty victims oftentimes of their own chosen passions and lusts, and perpetrating a countless number of cruelties, oppressions and wrongs, defying the very God that made them; yet I remember that, after all, no one of these sinners is an absolute fiend, and a thousand beautiful affections and virtues spring up all along the common waysides of life, which, in the clamor and false shows of the world, we are apt to overlook and forget. As to strong representations of prevailing wickedness now, or in any past age of the world, they never amount to much in such an argument as we have been pursuing. We get our conceptions of existing depravity, less from the actual condition of mankind at

any one time, than from the contrast between that and our *ideal* of what mankind should be. Seen in the back ground of a growing conception of goodness, the world will continually appear to be degenerating, even though it may be making great advances on an improving path ; and short of that point at which it *cannot* be made any better, we shall always be pained with the contrast between what it *is* and what it *might* be, and pained more deeply the more we grow sensitive to sin. Even if we should admit that sin *vastly*, and out of all proportion, preponderates in the moral world, and that the dip of the present system, as the geologists express it, is downwards, let us still see the light that streams across the dark abyss. What are the six thousand years, in which the world has been inhabited, to *Him* to whom a thousand years are as one day ? The race of man is but in its infancy. Look back and see what only two hundred years have done to set the civilized nations forward. Draw the inspiration of hope from the future, and do not condemn that nature which has had only a few days, as it were, and at the disadvantage of its infantile and childhood beginning, to put itself forth.

And, finally, if you ask meanwhile how can all the wrongs and sins which do exist now, and will exist for some time at least, if you ask, how can these be reconciled with the existence of an almighty and all good Being, let me tell you to find your explanation in something better than the shallow statement that God made man for mere happiness, according to our present notions of happiness. Remember God made man for spiritual greatness, and this supposes virtue, and virtue supposes trial ; and in one text of scripture I find more light shed upon this subject than from all our speculations,—it is that passage which says there is more joy in heaven over one

sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance. Sufferings and sins may be the needed instruments to train up the highest form of goodness; and one soul, resplendent with the image of God and bearing his divine likeness through eternity, may more than justify all the imperfections of this passing scene.

And, now, in committing this subject to the sympathies of the present occasion, may I express the hope that the discussion to which we have attended will *not* be without its lesson to him whom we are to set apart to the ministry of reconciliation. If he believes that the views now set forth are based on the facts of man's nature, and constitute that true and sufficient statement which the Apostle gave, and which was the foundation of all *his* labors and zeal, here be they then preached with a directness and urgency as if sin be man's own freely chosen act, with a solemnity that feels there is nothing so awful as sin, and with an importunity that sees how many are man's liabilities and perils through the deceitfulness of the human heart. But amid all this, and above it all, let faith span the bow of hope, remembering that man's nature has the seed of a great destiny in it, and grateful for the privilege of pleading for his recovery through Jesus Christ. AMEN.

NOTE.

Page 16. I refer to the Rev. Dr. Ware, senior, who, in his celebrated controversy with the Rev. Dr. Woods, of Andover, had the following sentence in his first series of "Letters addressed to the Trinitarians and Calvinists:"—"*Even in the worst men, good feelings and principles are predominent, and they probably perform in the course of their lives many more good than bad actions; as the greatest liar does, by the constitution of his nature, doubtless speak many truths to every lie he utters.*" Ware's Letters, p. 24, second edition, Cambridge, 1820. In his postscript to the second series of Letters, Cambridge, 1823, the author says, referring to the above sentence, "That sentence I think it my duty to recal, not on account of its bearing in this controversy; for the evidence of neither the great points at issue, is either strengthened or weakened by it; but because, in the sense which my words most naturally convey to my reader, I believe it not to express the truth, and because I am apprehensive that its practical influence, as far as it shall have any, will be such as I should deprecate." p. 46.

I cannot refer to the above named controversy without adding, that any one interested in the subject of this Discourse, will find both sides there discussed with singular fairness and acuteness, and with a fulness and strength to which but little has been since added by either party represented by those venerable men. A new generation has grown up since their "Letters" were given to the public, and a sincere inquirer for the truth may well be directed to them, as constituting, on the whole, the best discussion of the subject which the great controversy in regard to the nature of man has called forth.

In this same connection I may refer the reader to a remarkable article in the American Biblical Repository for July, 1839, on the question, "What is sin?" written by the late Prof. Stuart, of Andover. In this article, the texts of scripture usually quoted to prove the original sinfulness of man's nature, are, one after another, set aside as utterly inadequate to the purpose for which they are adduced, and the interpretation of them, given twenty years before by Dr. Ware, is substantially adopted and confirmed. Several examples may be here quoted, as illustrations of that progress in theology to which allusion was made in the Discourse.

1. Dr. Woods, in his Letters to Unitarians, p. 33, quoted Genesis 6:5, as proof of the original depravity of our nature. "*God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*" This language he regarded "as relating to mankind universally, or to human nature." p. 33.

In his reply to this, Dr. Ware contends that this text "relates not to mankind universally, but to the degenerate race of men of that age;" and

describes, not what they were by nature, but what "they have *become* in the use or rather abuse of their Creator's gifts." Dr. Ware's Letters, p. 32.

If we turn now to the article in the Repository, p. 36, we shall find Professor Stuart's commentary on this passage, as follows:—"On this text I remark, in the first place, that it is spoken of the *antediluvians*, who were so wicked that God was moved to drown the world on their account. Then, secondly, it is something essentially of an *active* nature which is here characterized as sin, *every imagination*, *every fiction*, *formation* of the thoughts of men which is wicked. This, of course, exempts the case from the category of *original* sin, which precedes all voluntary thought, desire or affection; and here we might therefore rest the whole matter. But it is said that the passage applies to *all* men in the sense of charging original sin upon them, and is not designed merely for the antediluvians, because in Genesis 8:21, it is declared as a universal truth, that "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." But if the first passage in Gen. 6:5 applies in its full force to all men, as a charge of original sin, at all times and in all places, then, of course, there was, and always had been ever since the fall of man, and is now, just the same or just as much reason for bringing the flood upon the earth that there was in the time of Noah. Why, then, did it not come sooner? or why not since? And besides this; what means *the imagination being evil from* YOUTH? How can we force the word *youth* to designate merely the earliest period of infancy? What means *the wife of thy youth?* Prov. 5:18, Mal. 2:14. What means *the children of thy youth?* Psalm 127:4. Do men take wives and beget children in infancy?"

2. Dr. Woods cited Psalms 14:3. "*They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*" He thinks this must mean "the children of men, the human race, all the world." Letters to Unitarians, p. 37.

Dr. Ware, on the other hand, holds that such an interpretation "goes on the supposition that the sacred writers used words as no other writers ever did use them, with perfect philosophical exactness instead of the popular sense;" and shows what absurd meanings we force upon the scripture if we insist upon taking literally what was evidently intended only in a popular and qualified sense, as where we read, Col. 1:23, the gospel is "*preached to every creature under heaven*," meaning not to *all* individuals, but to men of every nation and rank. So in Psal. 14:3, the writer means that *many* persons, perhaps *most* persons *had gone aside;* but he could not mean literally *all*, because in the very next verses he goes on to speak of a "*people of God, a generation of the righteous, whose refuge was God.*" Ware's Letters, pp. 33, 35.

We will look now to Professor Stuart's remarks on the use of expressions of the abovenamed kind. "In my own apprehension, it would be as correct to say, that we must interpret the scriptures *literally* when they speak of the hands, feet, eyes, mouth, arm, sword, shield, buckler, bow, arrows, &c., of the Almighty, as to say that we must interpret the texts before us in

a *literal* manner. Who does not see, or rather, who can refuse to see, that they are animated expressions designed to characterize with intensity the great and long continued wickedness of the individuals to whom they are applicable, wickedness even from the earliest period of their being when they were susceptible of sin? Must I, when the prophet Isaiah says, 'Behold the Lord maketh the earth empty, and turneth it upside down,' or when the Psalmist says, 'God did fly, yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind,' or when he says again, 'The mountains skipped like rams, the little hills like lambs,' must I find a *literal* meaning for all this? or was it intense feeling in the poet or prophet which gave birth to such language, and which is to be interpreted merely as the language of intense feeling?" Repository, p. 33.

Those who heard the Convention Sermon in 1850, will not soon forget how eloquently the subject, indicated by these last quoted lines, was there discussed.

3. Dr. Woods adduced Ephesians 2:3, "*And were by nature children of wrath even as others.*" This means, he says, "to be born so, or to be so in consequence of our birth, or in consequence of our natural disposition." Letters to Unitarians, p. 47.

Dr. Ware's comment on the passage is as follows:—"The connection and circumstances of the case show the meaning of this verse, and that it furnishes no proof of *inborn* moral corruption, but only of corrupt and wicked *habits*. It refers to the former state of the Jews as well as heathen, before their conversion to Christianity. In that state they were all alike children of wrath, not as they came into the world, not as they came from their Maker's hands, but as they became by their habits, customs and practices;" their former corrupt condition being their state of *nature*, in contrast to their present purer condition, which was a state of *grace*. Letters to Trinitarians, p. 45.

Let us turn now to Prof. Stuart's remarks on this text:—"It seems to me to be a plain and obvious construction of the language, to interpret it as designating the unregenerate or natural state or condition of man, in distinction from a regenerate one. * * * And such precisely is the meaning of Paul in saying that *by nature we are children of wrath;* i. e., in our natural state or condition we are exposed to divine wrath, and have no claim to the merit of any deeds which are holy or virtuous. Let those who press hardly here upon the words, *by nature*, beware well of the consequences, exegetical and logical, of so doing. Paul, in Romans 2:14, speaks of "the heathen who have no law as doing *by nature* the things contained in the law." What sort of a *nature*, then, is that which leads the heathen to *obey* the law? Might not a Pelagian take his stand here, and show from this text, with a logic as good at least as that of the opposing party, that our nature would of itself always lead us to do right? Just as well, we are forced to concede, as one can quote Ephesians 2:3, in order to prove that our nature is itself a sin." Repository, p. 38.

4. I will only refer to the side which Prof. Stuart takes on one other point, in controversy between Dr. Ware and Dr. Woods. The former writer maintained that "a propensity to sin is itself no sin and implies no guilt. This may be illustrated by examples. A man has a strong propensity to any kind of excess. He becomes criminal only in the proportion that he yields to it. If he does not yield to it, but preserves temperance and moderation, he is reckoned the more meritorious in proportion to the strength of the propensity which he has had the virtue to resist." Answer to Dr. Woods's Reply, p. 82.

To this Dr. Woods says:—"Every man must decide, and does decide, that a propensity, inclination, or disposition to sin, is the very essence of sin, and the only thing which makes any outward action or volition sinful. Before we impute real blame to a man for any action, we either know or take it for granted, that he has a wrong disposition or propensity. And in regard to ourselves, if in any case where our actions appear exceptionable in the view of man, we are conscious of no bad disposition or propensity, we charge ourselves with no real guilt. But how fair soever our actions may appear to man, if we are conscious of having a sinful propensity or disposition, we condemn ourselves,—we condemn ourselves for the disposition itself, as being the essence of sin." Dr. Woods's Reply, p. 135.

And again:—"If it is said the sin consists in yielding to temptation, my reply is, that such yielding never takes place without a *disposition* to yield, and that this disposition, after all, constitutes the sin of yielding." Dr. Woods's Remarks, p. 48.

The view of this subject taken by Prof. Stuart can be presented only by a longer quotation than I have yet made, but will, I am sure, reward perusal. "How can we maintain with any proper consistency and regard to the real nature of man and the character of God, that our native susceptibilities are *sins?* or that all susceptibilities to impression by enticements to sin, is itself a sin? We cannot do this, with any consistency. Adam had at first a susceptibility to impressions from sinfully enticing objects; else he had never felt the enticing power of them, nor sinned, nor fallen. He had this susceptibility even in his original state of primeval innocence. How, then, can such a susceptibility be called of itself a *sin?*

The fallen angels had such a susceptibility in their original pure and holy state; otherwise they had never felt the power of enticement to sin, and never would have fallen.

With the deepest reverence I say it, the Lord Jesus Christ himself had a susceptibility of feeling the power of enticement to sin; like to that which Adam had before his fall. If not, then he did not really and truly take on him human nature. The fact that such a susceptibility belonged to Adam, in his primitive state, shows that it belongs to human nature in its perfect probationary state. The blessed Saviour, then, might have had it,—he did and must have it, in order to be truly *man*. If not, how could he be tempted to sin? Above all, how could he be "tempted in all points as we are?"

Indeed, can we conceive of a nature truly human, without such a susceptibility? But if Adam, in his original state, had a measure of this susceptibility, if the Saviour himself, possessing our nature, had a measure of this, how are we going to make out a susceptibility of this kind to be in itself a *sin?* Was Adam a *sinner* before his fall? Is He "who knew no sin," to be reputed a sinner because he could feel the power of enticement to sin? These questions do not need a specific answer.

Why, then, should we not be consistent here in theologizing? That which Adam possessed as a constituent of his very nature before his fall, that which the Saviour himself possessed, when he was "tempted in all points as we are," should not be called sin. How can we deem it safe and discreet and proper thus to employ language? And if it is not, then why should the same thing be called *sin* in infants at the present time?

It will doubtless be asked here; what, then, is there not such a thing as a *sinful* disposition or bias, taste, inclination in man? Are we to abandon all expressions of this sort, so long established by usage and the common sense of mankind?

Not at all to abandon them, is my reply. Whenever a disposition, bias, inclination, propensity, or whatever of this nature one may please to name it, is spoken of as being *sinful*, the phraseology evidently may have two different meanings. In the one case, if by the phraseology in question we mean to designate the bias or inclination or propensity to evil, which men have created for themselves by practically indulging in sin, then these words may be taken in their natural and proper sense. It is a known law of our being that the indulgence of forbidden desires and practices strengthens our propensity to evil. The man, then, who is guilty of such indulgence, is truly and properly a *sinner* because of his strengthened *propensities* to evil. All which he has done to augment these propensities has been voluntary transgression of God's law; and for these propensities as thus augmented or aggravated, he is altogether accountable as a sinner. They are not only the evidence of his sin, but inasmuch as he has made them strong and imperious, so far as they have been augmented, and made to become imperious by him, they are themselves *sinful*, because they have been strengthened by voluntary sinful indulgence.

But there is another sense which may be given, and has not unfrequently been given to the phrase *sinful* disposition, bias, inclination, taste, &c. It has been applied to characterize the *original* susceptibilities, belonging to our nature, of being impressed by enticements to sin. In such a case, can any thing more be properly meant by this phraseology, than that these susceptibilities are adapted to lead or to excite us to sin? If we do mean more, and if we insist upon it, that in their original state, and before voluntary action, these are *actually sin*, then several consequences must follow from this which are of serious import, and which are entitled to sober consideration.

1. Our *native* susceptibilities, taste, disposition, or whatever name is

given to these as a designation, are not the result of any thought, design, voluntary action, or influence of any kind put forth or exerted by ourselves. We are in *no* sense the proper *authors* of them.

2. God is our Maker. The laws of our nature have been arranged solely by him. He is the ultimate author of our being, of the whole of it, with all its faculties, endowments, attributes, properties, or propensities, as it exists before any voluntary action on our part.

These two positions do not need proof. To state them is sufficiently to demonstrate them; therefore,

3. If our native propensities are themselves a *sin*, *then* the conclusion seems to be plain and inevitable, that God is the author of sin; not merely that he has made beings who can commit sin, but that he has made beings a part of whose very nature, as it comes from his hands, is sin. I am unable to see how this conclusion can be fairly avoided by any, who maintain that our original propensities are themselves, and in their very nature, sin. I am unwilling to plunge into the yawning gulf which is laid open by such a process of thought. * * * That God has made beings who can and do sin, is certainly true. He made angels of light, who did sin; he made the original parents of our race, who did sin; he makes us also who do sin. Free agents, *in a state of probation*, must have a power to sin; else they are not free agents in any state of probation. Probation means trial; a trial without the power or possibility of sinning, would seem to be a mere empty name without meaning." Repository, pp. 50—53.

This Article in the Repository was published nearly twenty years after the controversy between Dr. Ware and Dr. Woods. At the time of that controversy, as is well known, Prof. Stuart and Dr. Woods were co-laborers in the seminary at Andover, and the latter gentleman published his Letters to Unitarians "at the suggestion and by the request of his beloved colleague." How far Prof. Stuart then approved of the Biblical interpretation of Dr. Woods, we are not able to say; but at any rate, the Article in the Repository is honorable proof either of the freedom allowed at Andover, or of the progress in sound interpretation which has there been made, as the above coincidences with the views of Dr. Ware are confirmations of the essential accuracy and strength of his positions.

ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE.

BY REV. THOMAS STARR KING.

Christian Friends,

The services which are designed to impress upon the young minister the importance of the office to which he consecrates his powers,—the wise discourse, the fervent supplication for heavenly guidance and blessing, the solemn charge, the greeting of welcome and pledge of sympathy and fellowship, are ended. So far as human rites can avail, a minister is now ordained over you. But remember that, for his success, or even for his faithfulness, our brother is not wholly responsible. You are to help him. You have entered into a solemn contract here for a common purpose, and by the way in which you discharge your share of the duties, are to assist him to perform his.

Every parish has a peculiar situation and peculiar needs, and therefore is called on to help its minister in some way peculiar to itself. In your case, brethren and friends, one of the supreme obligations seems to be, that you feel yourselves deeply interested in the establishment here of the form of Christian truth to which you and your minister are pledged. The difficulties that beset every infant society are in your way ; more than those,—for the enthusiasm of a young enterprise has, with you, been reduced and damped by some ill success. And you must now replenish it from strong convictions of duty. Work in this portion of the vineyard, that the foundations of

your system of faith may be layed strong and impregnable. Do not be afraid to be called partisan or sectarian, because of your visible attachment and zeal. In a community so given up as ours to the pursuit of worldly goods, devotion to any ideal interests is a saving grace, and remember that, with every parish, zeal for a peculiar form of religious truth, is zeal for Christianity. You have taken the name Unitarian, not as indicating a philosophy, not as the signal of some speculations which please the fancy and amuse the intellect, but as symbolical, among the different interpretations of heavenly truth, of what *you* hold to be the distinctiveness and vitality of the gospel of Christ.

Many persons are very much afraid of being sectarian in their action. They would be willing to work for *Christian truth*, but are very sensitive lest they be found working for some sect or party. Certainly the sectarianism that expresses itself in denunciation, bitterness, and unscrupulous methods, is one of the lowest forms of antichrist; certainly there is a Christian *living* which is the supreme object of the gospel, and that is fed from principles, through the agency of the Spirit, which the most discordant creeds unfold. But if you labor for Christian truth at all, surely it must be for that description of it which you accept; if you believe that your principles are coincident with the gospel, you will see that all effort in their favor is effort for the gospel, and all sluggishness, indifference to the gospel; and you may be well assured that there is no nobler employment of the human intellect than a zealous interest for *some* Christian party, under the inspiration of loyalty to the truth of Christ.

Of what account are we, in this universe, which blazes on every hand with the glory of the Almighty, if we are not servants of something that is eternal; if we do not

make it part of our office to assist the truth, to stand for it, defend it, and give it the impetus of our voices, hands and lives ? This is true humility, this is true self-sacrifice, this is true loftiness of nature, to feel joy in the spread of a regenerative truth ; to feel new strength added to us whenever the means of aiding a principle are increased ; to be conscious of no private interest so dear, as the widening boundary of some worthy cause. Many men have a great repugnance to bigotry, partisanship, sectarianism, who perhaps are in a moral state that, in a scale of spiritual dignity, is below bigotry, below an unworthy sectarianism,—a state of coldness and indifference to truth. If they could open their natures even to a feeling of bigotry, it would be an advance, for it would indicate a budding faith in the importance and supremacy of truth, and would be a step towards a cordial devotion of spirit to what may properly command our respect and service.

Alas ! for what we sometimes call our liberal Christianity, if we grow to feel that it has no religious truths and principles that are essential to the welfare of society, no distinctive roots from which the bloom of a sweet and perfect piety must flower, no holy peculiarity which we are willing to sacrifice ourselves to make more common. Alas for us ! if, when we would be more fervent and pious, we laboriously import phrases and sentiments from abroad, which our ideas cannot justify, and hope to find in sacred forms of speech merely, which are vascular where they grow, but which begin to die when they are transported, — a food for our hearts that should be sought in a ripening of our own vine. Then we confess that our system is a fruitless thing in a fruitful world, and fit only to be the toy of speculative curiosity.

Resolve, then, to help your minister by some enthusi-

asm for the Christian opinions in which he has been educated, and to which he has pledged his powers, and which it is part of his duty to commend here. Be devoted to it, not as his truth or your truth, but God's truth,—and if truth at all, essential truth to yourselves and the world. Build a church for him and for it. Deepen the feeling, as you come over to this part of the city from your business, as you sit in your houses, as you enter your hall of worship on the Sunday, that there should be a church of your faith, a Unitarian church in this portion of the metropolis, that the architecture on this island is not varied enough, and your Christian fidelity not manifest, until its walls enclose your own altar, and its spire points to the heavenly temple and the risen Christ.

Christian character, brethren, is often best tested, sifted and strengthened by some hard and homely task, set in rough distinctness before the will. When the young lawyer went to our Master to learn his spiritual state, and what was necessary for him, Jesus set one test duty before him. He did not bid him examine and criticise his emotions, but said, "Sell thy property for the poor and follow me." And, in your case, the great problem of action which must test and reveal your zeal, your willingness to sacrifice, your harmony of purpose, is the building of a church and the paying for it. It must be the initial step of a true and lasting prosperity, for the solemn and tender sanctities of the Sabbath and the holiest influences of our religion and its rites, cannot be associated with a hall; you will find, moreover, that in the endeavors to accomplish thoroughly this object, a spiritual benefit will accrue, and that the denials, the consecrated time and dollars, the holy hopes and vigorous fellowships that shall produce here an *outward* sanctuary of your faith, will prove also the quarried strength

of the Spirit, from which the inward temple of grace and character will be advanced towards perfection.

An ancient prophet said, "There shall be like people, like priest." We do not sufficiently appreciate the influence of a parish in making a minister what he is. There are some men in the ministry of such single and steady aim, so devoted, so filled with the Holy Ghost, that they will work on in their appointed field for years, undaunted by coldness and difficulties, and succeed, perhaps, in raising a congregation by the power of their preaching and the attraction of their life. But there are few such men. Most ministers need the aid of spiritual sympathy and co-operation, to keep them faithful to the highest objects of their calling. If the tone of life in a society be sensual and worldly; if scarcely any interest is manifested in the noblest objects of Christian fellowship; if the church is thinly attended whenever a slight occurrence can be tortured into an excuse for absence; if the suggestion of a religious topic in conversation is always met by silence, or stiff and cold formality of manner; no matter how kindly and generously the preacher may be treated as a companion and friend, his usefulness must inevitably be impaired. Insensibly he will come to view himself as a cultured visitor in parlors, or the sacred ornament of festive scenes, and the tone of his expression and feeling will gradually be moulded to the spirit and expectation of those whom he habitually meets.

See to it, brethren, that here the world shall not give the law to the church. Respect the peculiarity of his office, whom you have chosen as a minister, and thus help him to be deeply conscious of its peculiarity. If you wish him to be a pastor, find some way to let him know the deeper habits of your thought, and the general

drift and depth of your faith. We never expect of our physician that he will spend much time in making us visits of good fellowship, and I do not think that any parish has the slightest right to claim, under the title of pastoral fidelity, a round of shallow social calls from a preacher which, year in and year out, amount to nothing in extending their spiritual acquaintance. Pastoral visits would indeed be blessed things if, without any cant, catechising, or repulsive formality, they could bring about an unreserved communication of spiritual experience,—the beliefs, the doubts, the varying hues of faith in God, duty, the Bible and destiny. It is one of the first conditions of success that a man should know what sort of congregation he preaches to,—whether they are skeptics, or believers, or perplexed and uncertain, or indifferent, or people in search of religion. The complaint often made at the present day that the pulpit has too little relation to actual life is, in a great measure, chargeable to the indifference of people whether ministers know what their actual life, with its wants and dangers, *is*. If a preacher does not possess the genius of Shakspeare, and there are at least ten chances to one that he will not, it will not be possible for him to construct all the phases and shades of character, or all the forms and expressions of trial, from his imagination ; he must learn them from experience and the free, frank talk of his people.

If, then, any of you have any doubts about any element of religion, tell them to your minister. It will be a true act of honor to his office. If you see or feel any difficulties in the way of belief or practice, tell him ; ask him perhaps to preach about them. If you have had any marked peculiarity of experience, tell him. It will enrich his mind, enlarge his knowledge of life, and make your acquaintance in the deepest sense valuable. Do

not wait till some sudden and serious affliction brings with it the necessity of your pastor's presence, and then expect some relief from his prescriptions, in the same way that a skilful physician masters a bodily disease. Those providential seasons are blessed opportunities, and when the soul is ploughed deep by affliction, and the soil is soft, the best seeds may be sown by a faithful hand that will bear good fruit. But what vast advantage is gained by your pastor and yourselves, if, before such seasons come, he knows the under current of your feeling, and there is between you a hearty Christian understanding.

The parish with which a minister is connected has an influence upon him through the criticism which they make upon his sermons. People will criticise sermons; ministers somehow will hear of it; and every minister, I presume, is so far human, that he likes to know that his preaching is welcome, and to hear that it is praised. But it too often happens that one kind of sermons receive all the hearty commendation, and that about another kind there is a significant silence. A discourse that is brilliant, discursive, argumentative, excites wide admiration. I hope you will pardon the coarseness of the figure, for the sake of its deplorable fitness, when I say that there are some congregations, and some persons in almost every congregation, that esteem a minister as a sportsman values a horse, if he can beat any thing on the course. A great many members of all parishes so far abet this feeling, as to commend most heartily the more intellectual performances of the pulpit, and to express little interest in the more searching and serious sermons which they hear.

Now, so far as the influence of the parish weighs with the preacher, such a course is the offering of a premium

for essays and rhetoric, and a deliberate depreciation of solemn and evangelical instruction. To be sure, a minister ought to have principle enough to follow his conscience in such matters, and labor for the lasting benefit, rather than the transient pleasure, of his parish; but it is equally obligatory upon hearers to see that the attractions they offer are aids, rather than obstacles, in the way of his duty. If a preacher sin in this respect, when the temptations to the sin are strong, he is not alone responsible; a portion of the guilt must be distributed among the accessories. I believe I may assume to speak the deep feeling of every preacher, in saying that there is no flattery so sweet, no commendation so delightful, as a word of gratitude for a spiritual sermon. When any parishioner says, "I thank you for that discourse; it did me good; we need such preaching often,"—encouragement is given which, next to the Divine approval, is the strength and joy of the heart.

See to it, also, my friends, that you help your pastor by the spirit in which you go to church and attend his ministry. Two words are in frequent use now, as descriptions of Sabbath congregations and the effect of the services, which it is to be hoped that you will strive to bring into disrepute,—the words, "audience" and "entertainment." "We had a large audience this morning;" "I was exceedingly entertained with the discourse;"—Are not these phrases, which, in many quarters, have become so common, really *startling* for their suggestions of the direction in which we are drifting? As though the church has become a lecture room, or lyceum hall, and the religion of Jesus entered into competition with the museums, novels, art-galleries, to supply amusement or some form of delight to the sensibilities of people, and turn the hours of the Sunday into

unctuous pastime. The fault is not wholly, or chiefly, with preachers, that these words are so common, for, with a great many persons, the more sincerely and fervently a man should pray, and the more devoutly preach, the more highly would they profess themselves entertained. If Isaiah himself should return and unfold his awful burden, they would admire his gestures; if Gabriel should descend to preach the miseries of sin, they would applaud the elocution. The trouble is in not entering the church with the proper tone of feeling, and with preparation for the associations which the place naturally awakens in earnest souls. Your place of meeting, wherever it is, is a sacred place; not in itself more sacred than any other building, or any spot which the omnipresence of God is believed to fill; but sacred because of the interests, affections, emotions and needs which its walls and its silence answer and express. And, therefore, go up to its shelter, not as an audience, but as a congregation of worshippers; not to *sleep*, for then you will not even be an *audience*; not to observe some services, but to join in them; not to be wearied with a prayer, but to pray; not for entertainment, but for instruction and revival. Remember that you are to give, as well as receive, in getting any benefit; to give the proper mood without which benefit will not come. Especially meet the sermon half way. Every thing depends on that. Eloquence and fervor are powerless unless you do that. Plain ministrations will prove efficient, if you do that. In justice to many excellent men, faithful servants of Christ, who are not successful in their parishes, and are therefore thought to have mistaken their calling, it should be remembered, that a spark will kindle combustible material into a flame, but that a stream of electric fire from heaven cannot ignite a soaked and soggy log.

And, brethren, strive to be a church rich in good works, to be not merely hearers of the word, even faithful and attentive hearers, but *doers* of it as a Christian organization. Desire to be a force in the civilization of our city, a buttress against evil, a leavening power in the general sentiment, a compact organism of Christian charity towards the poor, a treasury of genial forces, that in some way shall reach the destitute and perishing classes. Every portion of the body of Christ, if it be alive, offers itself freely as an instrument for the working spirit of Christ. The sign of life is *power*. No surer indication can be given that you are growing fruitful in the inward graces, than that you are felt in a community as a stimulant of goodness, a condemnation of all time-serving, a help of all the sacred laws, an ally of all righteous enterprises that promise the welfare of humanity. Our prayer for you is, and will be, that, encouraged by this new relation, and co-working with a faithful pastor, you may be a true church, walking in the beams of Christian truth, and standing before the world like "a city set on a hill, whose light cannot be hid."

RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP.

BY REV. H. F. HARRINGTON.

The time has been, here in New England, my friend and brother, when the pleasant office that I am about to perform, was a symbol of far greater significance and emphasis than now. In the good old days, the Christian ministry constituted a leading power in the body politic, whose influence was felt in every branch and posture of affairs. And the pledge of the fellowship of the churches to one just consecrated to the service of Jesus Christ, assured him of a sympathy, potent to hedge his vocation about with safeguards of temporal comfort and privilege, and of an assistance in emergencies, that should manifest itself in practical and tangible effects. But the times have changed. The social importance of the minister, both relative and actual, has greatly diminished; and there is no power now behind his throne, the pulpit, to bestead him with emphasis in any crisis of his affairs.

There are not a few, therefore, who sneer at such a formality as this, as being only the rattling dry bones of a once honored and significant custom; who believe that the fellowship of ministers and churches now-a-days, is altogether too lean and nominal to be worth the having. And if you have entered the ministry with any low and sordid aims; or, indeed, barren of a holy and absorbing purpose; if the religious duties that will devolve upon you foreshadow themselves, not as solemn and glorious opportunities, but only as the accidents of your pro-

fession ; then, I counsel you, do not take the hand which as the organ of the council that has sanctioned these solemnities, and of the churches it represents, I shall extend to you. Do not take it. It will pledge you nothing, it will symbolize nothing that will be to you so much as the breath of the passing wind. Do not take it! we will not enact, in the presence of God and of these witnesses, the farce of such an embrace. But if, as I believe and trust, you have resolved to give your life to the service of your Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, because, having already had experience of him as your personal Saviour, the life of your life, and your hope of glory, you feel that there is no peril so awful as that of a soul in sin, and that to rescue one such soul is worth the sore travail of a lifetime ; if you are thus prepared to prize the duties of your profession, with all its discomforts, uncertainties and hazards, as among the most exalted of temporal privileges ; and if you are earnest to begin your work in that spirit of entire self-surrender to Christ, whose utterance is, " Lord, what would'st thou have me to do ;"—then, my brother, take this hand ! It pledges to you prayers, unceasing prayers for God's own inspiration to sustain you ; sympathies, whose invisible cords will encircle you in all your ministrations of love and mercy ; and a fellowship, not only with the true disciples of Christ every where on earth, but with the spirits of the just made perfect, and with Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. There is nerve in the grasp that I give you in such a behalf. There is cheering welcome in every throb of my heart ; and may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, hallow and make effectual the promise of this hour !